

Traveller site threat to MPs

By David Charter

Chief Political Correspondent

A PROPERTY developer trying to force the Government to close a travellers' camp near his home yesterday threatened to set up similar sites near the homes of ministers, including Tony Blair.

Len Gridley, of Crays Hill, Essex, said that he had earmarked three pieces of land which he planned to sell to travellers in order to give senior government ministers "a taste of what it is like".

Mr Gridley, 45, said that the pieces of land would cost a total of £500,000 and were in the constituencies of Mr Blair, John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister, and David Blunkett, the Home Secretary.

The campaigner said: "If the Government does not keep its promise and close down the site at the bottom of my garden then I will buy those

pieces of land and sell them to travellers."

Villagers in Cottenham, near Cambridge, who are campaigning against a travellers' site of a similar size, have also threatened to set up their own "travellers' sites" outside the various homes of Mr Prescott.

Such controversies are rising up the political agenda, with the Conservatives promis-

ing to review the Human Rights Act to prevent its abuse by travellers claiming a right to family life as a means of staying on illegal sites.

Mr Gridley said the site had been established in 1986. A planning inquiry was held two years ago to establish travellers' rights to be on the land. This resulted in the travellers being given two years to leave.

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